



Branford Select Committee on Open Space Acquisition

MINUTES: MAY 1, 2017 - CANOE BROOK SENIOR CENTER

Attending: P. Bassermann, B. Horne, J. Merrick, E. Saulys, Town Planner Harry Smith, First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove, members of the public Harry Merrick, Carol and Joe Cutrona, and T. Elton [staff].

Chair B. Horne called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. P. Bassermann moved to accept the April minutes, seconded by E. Saulys; motion carried, with one abstention.

I Presentations and projects

H. Smith provided an update on the McCabe property. P&Z's public hearing on the Sterling Ridge development proposed for the property has been extended to May 4th, and possible again to the 18th. The new plan shows a less severe cut in the hill than initially designed, includes a conservation restriction, and shows the 'kit' house remaining as a single family dwelling. The Town Planner's staff report contains extensive details on the proposed development.

II Properties review & status

In addition to the McCabe property, E. Saulys reported that after speaking with an RWA official, there is no change regarding the property and that it does not appear to be a priority at this time. There was no activity to report on the Johnson [#38] or Linsley/Abbey [#31-34] properties.

III Unfinished/new business

B. Horne continued the discussion from earlier meetings on the committee's procedures for property review, communication with property owners, public notice and outreach, and other related aspects of the committee's work. The Town's upcoming POCD can serve as an opportunity to better inform the public at large as to what the committee's charge is and how it operates, including using criteria that are consistent with the COG's and state's POCDs and the state's Open Space Plan, and identifying partnerships it can forge to help qualify for state and federal funding. J. Cosgrove restated his belief that it's important for the committee to contact property owners before discussing properties at public meetings. P. Bassermann suggested renaming the committee eliminating "acquisition" from its title to better convey its work as an advisory panel. He also suggested that the committee document its process so it's clear how it functions. J. Cosgrove would like to the committee to have a higher level of engagement with the public and property owners. Action steps towards these ends include creating text to be posted on the Town website about the committee, drafting an outline of the committee's process for identifying and advising about prospective open space parcels, and researching models from other towns to serve as a resource in refining the committee's operation. P. Bassermann and J. Merrick volunteered to work with staff, and will report at the next meeting with its recommendations.

J. Cutrona asked that the committee formally remove the Lakso properties from the committee's list. H. Smith moved, seconded by P. Bassermann, that the properties be taken off the list; motion passed. He also offered that there is an expectation by the public at large for timely notice and suggested the committee's agenda, minutes and other information be more readily available. It was noted that while the committee was established by resolution as an advisory body and not created by ordinance and adheres to FOI requirements as do other boards and commissions, it should function above that standard in order to avoid sending a wrong message.

IV Announcements and adjourn.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 5th. With no further business, P. Bassermann moved to adjourn, seconded by E. Saulys; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:57p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Elton [recording secretary].